

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

17 April 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Present State of Soviet Civil Defense \*

1. Concept. Until approximately 1955, the Soviet civil defense program essentially reflected the conditions of World War II. It envisioned that upon declaration of a "threatening situation" shelters would be prepared for occupancy, civil defense formations alerted, and cities blacked out. As the enemy approached, the urban population would take cover and "stay put." More recently, however, the Soviet leaders have begun shifting to a concept which includes strategic evacuation of a portion of the urban population. Thus the current concept apparently employs both shelter and evacuation.

2. Shelter Protection. In the provision of shelters for the civil population the Soviet Union has a substantial lead

---

\* ORR was consulted in the preparation of this paper.

DOCUMENT NO. 10  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐  
☐ DECLASSIFIED  
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S (C)  
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1990  
AUTH: HR 70-2  
DATE: 17/6/80

SECRET

over any of the Western powers. Basement shelters of essentially World War II type are capable of providing some protection to perhaps 15 million urban dwellers against direct radiation and fire and, when equipped with air filtration devices, against fall-out. An estimated 2.5 million persons can take refuge in the subways of Moscow, Kiev and Leningrad which are deep and equipped with blast doors. An additional estimated 2.5 million key personnel can be housed in detached and tunnel-type shelters, and in underground bunkers; in many instances these are located in port areas, factories, and communications centers. Thus some kind of shelter is probably available for about one-fifth of the urban population of about 100 million.

3. The shelter program however, appears to be under reconsideration. Since 1955-56 there has probably been a decline in the number of basement shelters built, and information from four Soviet cities, including Moscow and Kiev, indicates that the program for basement shelters may have been sharply curtailed or abandoned in 1958-59. Recently there have been increased sightings of detached shelters, and this may also be connected with a decline in the importance attached to basement shelters. To date, there is very little evidence of shelter outside the major urban areas.

- 2 -

SECRET

4. Evacuation. In the past two years increasing emphasis has been given to evacuation, especially to preattack evacuation of "non effectives" from likely target areas and their resettlement elsewhere for the duration of the war. Civil defense units in cities, including fire-fighting, medical, engineering, and reconnaissance units, are being given greater mobility. Warning time permitting these units will leave the cities prior to attack. These and other units which are to be established in peripheral areas will then come to the aid of stricken cities. There is some evidence to indicate the existence of special civil defense troops, both full-time and reserve, which are equipped for bomb disposal, decontamination, and rescue. Civil defense authorities at republic and oblast levels are being given increased operational authority in order to provide more effective control of large-scale evacuations and to supply outside assistance to heavily damaged urban centers. As yet, there is no firm evidence of evacuation drills for the general public.

5. Training. Until 1955, the Soviet public was kept in almost complete ignorance of the effects of nuclear weapons. Until 1960, the public was generally instructed in terms of the capabilities of the atomic weapons dropped at Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

SECRET

Only in 1960 civil defense instruction is there explicit acknowledgment that fall-out will constitute a hazard up to "hundreds of kilometers" from the site of nuclear explosions and that people might have to remain in shelter for "many" days. But there has been no discussion in the large daily newspapers of the effects of the larger and more modern nuclear weapons.

6. Since 1955, civil defense training has been, at least in theory, both universal and obligatory. Such training is given in primary and secondary schools, in higher educational institutions, and to the general public by DOSAAF, the Soviet paramilitary society. Out of 140 million Soviet citizens over the age of 16 years about 80 million have received some instruction in civil defense, and some 20 million of these have probably received a good basic grounding in elementary civil defense techniques. Training has involved the use of shelters, gas masks, and on occasion protective clothing and radiation monitoring equipment. On the other hand, the training program has suffered in many areas from poor instruction, shortage of training aids, and public apathy. The cost of DOSAAF instruction for the period 1960-62 is estimated as on the order of 100 million US dollars.

- 4 -

SECRET

SECRET

7. Air raid drills have been conducted in about 20 Soviet cities, but primarily as command and staff exercises. Public participation has amounted simply to the clearing of the streets; most of the basement shelters are also used as storage space and it would require some hours before they could be cleared for occupancy. In key factories, while the workers move to shelter entrance, factory civil defense units don protective clothing and engage in fire drill, decontamination, and the like.

8. Organization. The organization of Soviet civil defense is essentially an inheritance from World War II. The headquarters of National Civil Defense (MPVO Strany), which has the major responsibility, is probably subordinate to the Ministry of Defense, which also controls active air defense (PVO Strany) and DOSAAF. MPVO Strany is nationwide in its structure, with a professional staff at each echelon of administration down to the more important factories. It maintains a national academy in Leningrad attended by both Soviet and Satellite civil defense officials and a network of district (oblast) schools for civilian authorities charged with civil defense functions. In every urban center the MPVO Strany staff has units for blackout public order, communications, rescue and repair, medical aid, and fire fighting.

- 5 -

SECRET

SECRET

9. Summary. In terms of shelters built and personnel trained, the USSR has made greater progress than any other major power. But even so it is evident that Soviet civil defense is not prepared at present to cope with the effects of modern weapons. Nonetheless, the existence of a disciplined civil defense organization, the use of shelter, together with widespread knowledge of simple techniques (e.g., first aid) would probably reduce casualties considerably (assuming some warning time), especially among key personnel.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES



Abbot Smith  
Acting Chairman

25X1

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

2nd run

REPRODUCTION

REQUEST

DATE

18 Apr

*du*  
TITLE OF PAPER

*Memo for DCI Civil Ref*

DISTRIBUTION

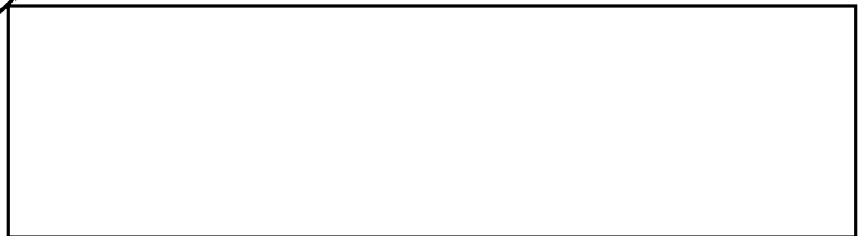
*Memo for DCI*

ADDITION DIST:

*see orig  
dist list*

25X1

*2 cys*



TIME REQUESTED

*Soon*

CONFIDENTIAL